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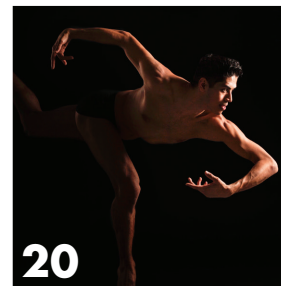
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ON THE COVER

Weddings in this community have as unique a style as the people getting married. Celebrate your own style. Pictured here, desserts by Chowgirls Killer Catering. Photo by Jaimee Morse Photography

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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671

Editorial Assistants Linda Raines 612-436-4694,
Kassidy Tarala

Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner

Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer

Contributors Patrick Boland, Kathleen Bradbury, Ellen Krug,
Steve Lenius, Shane Lueck, John Mark, Jennifer Parello, Randy
Stern, John Townsend, Bradley Traynor, Carla Waldemar

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690

Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard
Kranz 612-436-4675, Jory Miller 612-436-4695

Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator

Linda Raines 612-436-4660

Sales Lead Specialist Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693

Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

National Sales Representatives

Motivate Media 858-272-9023

Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678

Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679

Photographer Sophia Hantzes

Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.

President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665

Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666

Chief Financial Officer Mary Lauer 612-436-4664

Distribution Manager/Administrative Assistant Molly Gosh
612-436-4660

Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford

Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee
(1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford
(1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam
Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013),
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Bespoke Community

Wedding style and weddings. For those of us who aren't looking at walking down any aisle other than the cereal aisle—whether we're not dating, not interested, or no longer unmarried—the topic could be less than interesting. Some people have strong emotions about focusing on marriage, both positive and negative. Out of our 26 issues that we put out per year, we do gear at least four of them toward marriage. And it's important that we do. Because who else is? For free? With resources close to you? With vendors in this community as well as those who support this community? All of that is just plain positive, and we need to spread as much positivity around as we can these days.

In this community, we've got people who will be marrying as same-sex couples, as well as those who may be marrying as opposite-sex couples if they include someone who is bisexual or trans. And there's no saying you have to identify as any gender, either, to make sure we acknowledge that queer and non-binary/enby members of this community may not want to be classified as same or opposite or any. So this issue and wedding style covers a florist and a bartender in our community, killer catering that supports our community, and bespoke clothing that is for any type of couples and bodies that want to find clothing for their special day...or to attend a wedding of someone special in their lives.

As the internet has reshaped how we access what we need in life, I appreciate how it's opened up my access to clothing. Any of us plus-size people know that the stores only carry so many sizes. Same for tall.

Same for petite. I remember when I got my first order of custom-made clothing from eShakti after plugging in my measurements and sending them to India (let me know if any companies here in the U.S. do this for a reasonable price)...I put on clothing that was made to fit me and it was sheer euphoria. My body does not conform to the norm, but I was able to find clothing for it. I felt as invincible as pieces of fabric can possibly make a person feel. And, while all of that works for my everyday clothing, if I needed a special occasion outfit, I'd definitely look for someone close by and in real life to help me. It's that important to me.

When we get into the gender binary and looking at whether or not stores out there have what people in this community need, what do we find? It depends. It depends on the person, the body, the retailer, the goals for the clothing...and what about weddings? That narrows the search even more. So what do we offer here in this issue? Resources for people who want to feel invincible on their wedding day. Or as a wedding attendant or guest. Or for a great date. Or even a job interview. Bespoke clothing will help you find what you want for your day, wherever you identify in terms of clothing. Two suits? Two dresses? A suit and a dress? Any and all of the above.

Bespoke. It means that something is made to fit a particular person. And I can't think of any better term for this community.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■

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Lemonade

“Grossly misinformed.”

That’s the most generous phrase I could muster as I read my friend John Townsend’s piece, “When GLBT Nonprofits Lose Their Bearings” in the July 6 edition of this magazine.

Take your pick—“transgenderism” (a phrase which religious conservatives often use to marginalize); “lies about transgender suicide that could not be”; and “plant(ing)...ideation and ...idealization of suicide in vulnerable minds”—any one of these propositions reflects, at best, an incredible misunderstanding of what it means to be transgender.

At worst, together they demonstrate a deep bias—oh, I’ll just say it, transphobia—that has long been held by some gays and lesbians against trans folk. That bias goes back to Stonewall and a strategic decision by the architects of “gay liberation” to deliberately disenfranchise trans persons from the gay rights movement. That disenfranchisement continued through 2008 when the Human Rights Campaign willingly agreed to exempt trans people from the scope of a then-proposed federal law to protect gays and lesbians in employment.

We in the trans community called it “being thrown under the bus.” It’s been uphill for us ever since.

To be accurate and fair, the HRC has now gotten its act together relative to transgender people—even to the point of opposing a local Texas measure that would have protected gays and lesbians but not trans folks. Further, the HRC’s Corporate Equality Index mandates that a 100 percent rating requires trans-inclusive health policies, a step which has greatly expanded the number of employers who offer such policies.

All of that is good and something that I’m grateful for.

Yet, John’s piece reflects a critical missing link of understanding and compassion between us queer folk on the street. It’s not unlike something I heard three years ago at a book club comprised of older (60+) gay men who had read my memoir and invited me to talk about it. There was a great deal of friendly banter and frivolity. When we were done, one of the men quipped, “You’re actually a nice person. You’re the first transgender person I’ve ever really gotten to know.”

There’s the rub: how well do the GLBT letters know each other? Do they even want to?

I suspect because we’re all human, we each have our preconceived notions of what it’s like to be another letter. This is no different than how the straight community has its misimpressions of us as one indiscernible group—something that we collectively detest.

It’s human to have stereotypes. But it’s not okay to be ignorant of them and to then espouse misinformation that risks harming others.

I sure wish John had called me before he started typing.

Those who know me know that I’m a problem solver. Yes, I will pontificate, but always with the goal of making the world more compassionate for all persons regardless of what might otherwise separate us.

Even for those who get things so incredibly wrong.

Thus, I propose making lemonade out of a big fat lemon. Specifically, I propose using John’s piece as a reason to convene a meeting—maybe even a summit—to discuss how we in the GLBT alphabet perceive and treat each other. Let us use that as a jumping off point to better understand each other in our alphabet “family.” Perhaps it will also be a pathway to future collaborations that might benefit everyone in the community at large.

If you’re interested in collaborating to create this, email me at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com. I’m totally serious about helping to facilitate/lead the process for such an event.

One last item relates to my role as a contributor to this magazine, which I’ve been writing for since 2011.

Truth be told, I have moments of wondering if my words here matter. After all, I’m 60 years old and someone who came to the party awfully late by transitioning genders only eight years ago. I sometimes question whether I’m a good representative of the trans community. Indeed, a trans person once even offered that I was Lavender’s “house tranny.”

Ouch. I know, more ignorance.

That John’s piece showed up in this magazine gives me further pause. And pain.

Still, I know editor Andy Lien and many of the Lavender staff. From what I can see, these folks have always been forthright and accepting of me and, as far as I can tell, of other trans people.

They’ve never given me reason to think that I or my words are window dressing. I’m not being an apologist here, please understand, and only relating my experience.

The reality is that there are very few platforms with the reach of this magazine. To have an “out” trans person write regularly about being transgender means that my words—words of compassion and critical reminders about trans grit and resiliency and the need to protect transgender kids/youth—potentially reach many eyes and quite a few brains, GLBT or otherwise.

We all make mistakes. That’s not a reason to unfold something that has been so incredibly important to the Twin Cities GLBT community for decades.

Rather, the key is to learn from our mistakes.

Learn we must. ■



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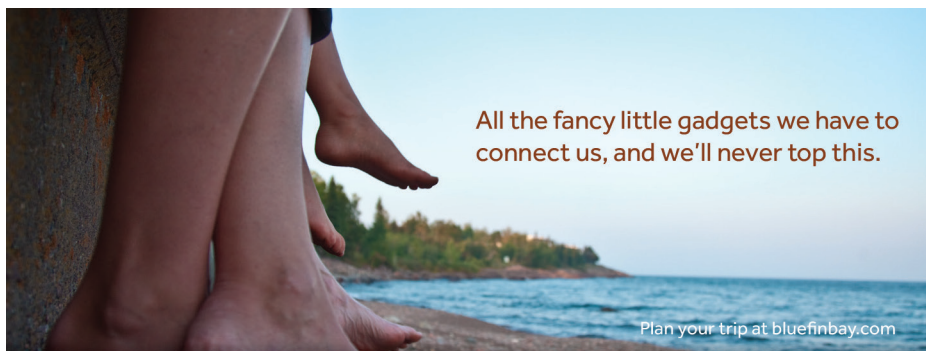
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OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

A Chance at the Game

As I write, six teenage women from Herat, Afghanistan are in the final hours of the 2017 FIRST Global international robotics challenge in Washington, DC with 163 teams from 157 countries.

Until just before the opening of the event dubbed the “Olympics of Robotics,” the disheartened six were resigned to watching their machine perform under others’ directions via video link in Herat. They had twice applied for visas, twice travelled the 500 miles from Herat to Kabul for interviews, twice been refused. Their robot’s parts had been held in customs for months, the U.S. State Department fearing their use by ISIS, giving them a shortened time frame within which to design their ball sorter from the kit identical to those sent to every participating team.

With only days to spare, enough international censure prompted intervention at a higher level and the six arrived in the U.S. just two days before their first competition after the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services finally approved a State Department request, essentially “paroling” the girls through the Department of Homeland Security.

Dean Kamen, FIRST Global founder and inventor of the Segway, said one objective of the competition is to teach children about robotics

or exploring STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) but that he also hopes the teamwork involved will impress upon youngsters the importance of cooperation with those of different cultures and languages. Toward this goal, teams are paired to form alliances, then, this year, on a playing field with simulated grass and water, their robots are expected to scan the flow of orange and blue balls on the painted river, recognize colors, and sort the clean (blue) balls from the contaminated (orange) ones.

Fourteen-year-old Fatemah Qaderyu told the Washington Post, “We feel really good that we can show our talents here. Afghanistan is not just a place of war. Afghan girls can build robots and compete in global competitions.”

Joe Sestak, president of First Global, credited “the professional leadership of the U.S. State Department” for ensuring that all 163 teams would be able to participate.”

However it came about, it was the right thing to do. The world, not just the U.S. will need all the bright and persistent minds it can muster, whatever the language or national origin, in the coming years. ■

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LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES



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DAY OF THE TRANSGENDER CHILD

JUNE 3, 2017



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GOLDEN VALLEY PRIDE FESTIVAL

JUNE 11, 2017



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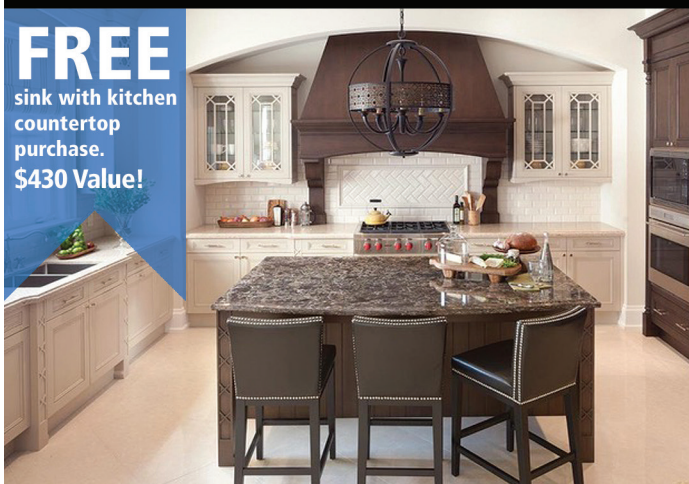
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The Cinema in Film, *The Spirit of The Beehive*. Photo by Luis Cuadrado

THE CINEMA IN FILM

Through Aug. 29
Trylon Cinema, 2820 E 33rd St.
Minneapolis
612-424-5468
www.trylon.org

Movies make a profound imprint on us that most of us tend to underestimate. Trylon Cinema reflects on this as their summer season's The Cinema in Film series continues. In the 1973 Spanish classic, *The Spirit of the Beehive*, a little girl experiences the shock of seeing *Frankenstein* for the first time. In Woody Allen's 1985 comedy, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, which won numerous Best Picture awards and nominations, Mia Farrow gives a devastating performance as a working-class woman whose view of love and romance has been totally shaped by pre-1940s cinema. *Beehive* plays Aug. 20-22. *Purple* plays Aug. 25-27.

Those thirsty to celebrate a mature gay master filmmaker in our time when youth rules as aggressively as ever will find sustenance in *The Long Day Closes*. Terence Davies (b. 1945) takes us to Liverpool in the '50s where 11-year-old Bud lives in his imagination under the wing of his family, church, and school. This film, among many things, is a reminder of postwar Great Britain's need

for healing. The magic of movie dialogue familiar to the time helps the struggling young protagonist look to the bright side and find hope for the future.

In recent years Davies gave us the devastating film version of *The Deep Blue Sea*, playwright Terence Rattigan's wrenching codified look at his gay experiences through straight proxies. This year he stunned again with *A Quiet Passion* in which a superlative Cynthia Nixon portrays a brutally and vividly honest portrayal of poet giant, Emily Dickinson. *The Long Day Closes*, Davies's 1992 classic, plays the Trylon Aug. 27-29.

FAITH - FROM ANGER INTO TRUST AND HOPE

Through Aug. 12
Minnesota Fringe Festival, Jungle Theatre
2951 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.fringe festival.org

David Lind bravely steps forward to tell his story on stage for the Minnesota Fringe Festival. He states, "I was sexually abused by the priest at my church when I was 14. I immediately repressed any memory of it. In the spring of 2007, I was 43 and a partial memory of the abuse surfaced; just enough to know that something had happened. I started therapy shortly after the memory surfaced

and, as part of my healing, I wrote. Being a theatre artist, a lot of what I wrote showed up as theatrical moments. I would see little vignettes in my mind and then put them down on paper. I eventually started fleshing them out into actual scripted scenes."

Lind continues, "Earlier this year, I decided to enter the Fringe Festival's lottery and try for a performing slot. At that point, I wasn't sure what I'd even produce—although I had a few different ideas. I was discussing my thoughts about what show I should produce with my son, who is currently the same age I was when I was abused, and he asked me how long it'd been since I performed or directed a Fringe Festival show. I had to look it up because it had been awhile."

Lind then realized it "had been ten years since I was last at the Fringe. The last time I participated was August of 2007. Just a few months after the memory surfaced. The coincidences were piling up. Ten years since the memory surfaced. Ten years since I'd participated in the Fringe Festival. And my son was now the age I was when I was abused. Too many coincidences for me to ignore. I decided that it was time to do this show."

However, Lind discovered the coincidences weren't over; "I found out my show opens on August 4, the deadline for both sides of the Archdiocese bankruptcy case to file their responses to each other's objections. And a few days after my show closes, Governor Dayton will be declaring Minnesota Break The Silence Day, August 16."

Lind's piece is certainly aimed at coming to grips with abuse with the hope that others



Faith-From Anger Into Trust and Hope.
Photo by Oliver Lind

can benefit from it. He points out that “the show looks at the healing journey of a clergy sexual abuse survivor. It really is about the journey from anger into trust and hope. There will be scenes that explore the anger, some that explore the work required to heal, others explore the magnitude of this issue as well as the issue of sexual assault—in addition to being abused by the priest at my church, I experienced statutory rape at sixteen and sexual assault as an adult.”

Here are the goals Lind has set out for *Faith – From Anger into Trust and Hope*:

- For survivors, it will hopefully serve as validation (someone else gets it).
- For supporters of survivors, it will hopefully provide insight as to their journey.
- For those who are ambivalent, it will give them a clearer picture of the survivor’s path.
- For those who think that this is about bashing the church or lawyers making money, it will show them that the hurt and pain are real.

GUARDIANS OF THE FALLACY: EXECUTIVE DISORDER

Through Oct. 28

Brave New Workshop, 824 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
612-332-6620
www.bravenewworkshop.com

Brave New Workshop continues to live up to its reputation as the snappiest and most skilled comedy theater in the region with this sharply executed new satirical revue on current political currents. Of course, at the center of it all is our controversial new President and the perils he seems to be continually warding off. BNW prides itself for offending people of different political orientations but in this case, director Caleb McEwen and his collaborating comic actors, have clearly weighed in on “the deplorables,” those particular white folks Hillary took to task during last year’s campaign.

Much of the show is connected by a tour enjoyed by a couple of Trump-loving hicks (Taj Ruler, Tom Reed) who seem on the verge of drooling due to inbreeding, and a scornfully critical, sharp-minded African American (Denzel Belin) who clearly isn’t enjoying himself. As they go through the Trump Presidential Library, one of the tour guides (Ryan Nelson) continuously refers to it as the “library” (no “r” after the “b”).

That said, Hillary returns in a haughty personification by the marvelous Lauren Anderson. To be sure, she isn’t portrayed exactly as likable and one vignette takes



Native Gardens. Photo courtesy of the Guthrie Theater

some unflattering digs at die-hard feminists. Moreover, this revue takes on women on both sides: for instance, Belin’s mocking crossgender take-down on Kellyanne Conway and nasty jabs throughout at Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Nonetheless, *Guardians of the Fallacy* leans unmistakably in a sustained disdainful way against the President. It also doesn’t really weight into how both parties in Congress have sustained poll numbers that are startlingly low since the Inauguration and their actions and inaction bolster citizens’ justifications for loathing them.

One of *Guardian’s* shiniest segments, however, is in the sunny, phony way some businesses stress that “All Are Welcome Here.” When an interracial gay couple falls in the crosshairs of this brand of political correctness, the effect is quite funny, though it could have been explored more critically. After all, GLBT people have been passionate proponents of that slogan and don’t we need to take some responsibility for its potential misuse?

It was very interesting to experience the revue on a heavily sold Saturday night. It was clear that much of the audience was right on board—their laughter and body language showed it. Many bordered on uncontrolled laughter, seriously! On the other hand, you

could sense the resistance of several others. Indeed, this is political comedy that borders on the explosive.

NATIVE GARDENS

Through Aug. 20

Guthrie Theater, 818 S Second St.
Minneapolis
612-377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

Guthrie Theater Artistic Director Joseph Haj continues to live up to his reputation as someone who widens the net of inclusivity. Playwright Karen Zacarias’s celebrated comedy, *Native Gardens*, portrays a clash of gardeners and of cultures. One couple, played by Jacqueline Correa and Dan Domingues, face off against another couple, played by Sally Wingert and Steve Hendrickson. Blake Robison directed the first production last year at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

Robison shares, “Karen is one of the few playwrights who knows how to write a really great comedy in the spirit of the good old-fashioned comedies. There’s a heightened nature of the interactions between the characters, but there’s also a great deal of truth in it. We have the privilege of finding where those meet and to tackle issues we’re all grappling with today in a big-hearted, relatable way.” ■



Out of the Shadows. Photo by Brandon Han

Queerness, Gender Inquiry, and Topnotch Comics Enliven This Year's Fringe Festival

The Minnesota Fringe Festival has been perennially inclusive of issues that deal with queerness, gender, and sexuality. Fringe is also a smorgasbord for madcap comedy. The problem with that, however, is that a lot of so-called comics aren't all that funny and as crafted as they think they are. So you may end up with less-than-stellar comedy when far better can be had. Check some of the comics listed below for some good bets.

As usual, this year's fest takes place at various Minneapolis venues. Performances typically last less than an hour with featured local artists and some from well beyond. What follows are recommendations and comments from some of the artists. Check the website

link at the end for details about where the performances play and for whatever specific offering you want to see.

Phillip Low, a Fringe veteran, says that his performance piece is drawn from the Tiresias character from classic literature. Titled *Serpentine*, Low points out that "transgender issues weren't really present at the start of the process, but they quickly became central. The play began life as an excerpt from a larger project—sort of an Inferno-esque collection of horrific monologues from the dead—but this section expanded until it took on a life of its own."

He elaborates, "I first encountered Tiresias in his short but compelling appearances

in Homer's *Odyssey* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*—"throbbing between two lives/Old man with wrinkled female breasts"—and he made a powerful impression on my adolescent mind. I dug up just about every mention of him in ancient Greek, most of which are little more than fragments, and attempted to stitch them into a coherent narrative. He's one of those fascinating, prophetic figures who shows up in an ancillary role in a huge variety of legends, from Narcissus to Oedipus."

Low points out, "It quickly became clear that it was going to be impossible to tell this story to a modern audience, in modern language, without gender becoming the narrative's cen-

tral axis. And as we're coming to grips with what gender means in our own culture, I hope it's useful to try to look at it through the lens of another which, as one might expect, is by turns painfully crass and startlingly egalitarian. He's an object of both contempt and admiration, and I found that ambivalence reflected across multiple texts."

Another Fringe '17 work gleaned from direct quotes is *Themselves They Made Immaculate: Clara Barton at Andersonville* drawn from the Congressional record. She was a legendary nurse and the founder of the American Red Cross. Pat Harrigan and director Matthew Foster have written contextual sections to clarify the drama. That superb actress, Linda Sue Anderson, relates Barton's experiences in the South just after the Civil War, particularly at Andersonville, the most infamous of the Confederacy's POW camps for Union soldiers.

Foster observes, "What's remarkable about the testimony is how Clara had this crystal-clear insight into trauma and what it did to people. She talks about how these people and events (in the way) a psychologist or a sociologist would approach them today. You really come to understand why Clara has the reputation for compassion that she has."

You surely know Denzel Belin for his outrageously entertaining gay-inclined performances at the region's premiere comedy theatre, the Brave New Workshop. For Fringe, however, Belin sits in the director's chair with Katherine Glover's *Ronald Reagan: Time Traveler*. He shares, "What I enjoy about Glover's script is that it contains a viciously funny combination of direct quotes, history, and creativity that has given the actors and me an excellent blueprint to play and have fun in. The amount of fun that is crammed into this one Fringe show is so much that it will be hard to not be delighted from beginning to end." Moreover, Belin has also directed *En Passant*, wherein two strangers make a sacrifice.

The legendary Patrick's Cabaret may no longer be at its old digs but the performance art incubator in a new form presents rotating line-ups of three artists sharing provocative work for each presentation. 15 community artists who have performed at Patrick's over the past 30-plus years provide the talent.

As part of *Wait...Didn't Patrick's Cabaret Close*, Hector Chavarria performs a work titled *I Feel Pretty*. He says, "This explores my struggle of keeping positive self esteem when voices surrounding me keep telling me I need to change in order to achieve acceptance. This piece is also a rebellious response to what society deems as beautiful. Mayda Miller will be accompanying me."



Couple Fight 3: Weddings. Photo by Anna Weggel-Reed

Fringe also gives us the opportunity to experience acclaimed San Francisco dancer and newcomer to Minnesota, Gabriel Mata. Having won major awards in choreography and performance, he presents *Out of the Shadows*. Mata has been noted for his defiance of gravity and his expansive use of performance space. He is also currently associated with the prestigious Zenon Dance Company in Minneapolis.

Another Brave New Workshop Funny Man, Tom Reed, is back again in solo form at this year's Fringe with his parody *Stranger-er Things: Netflix and KILL*. Horror, nostalgia, and pop culture intersect. Reed is also directing some BNW veterans, including Shanan Custer, in *Couple Fight 3: Weddings*. Reed seems to be a man tapping into new energy zones as he is also appearing on stage in the coming months in *Guardians of the Fallacy: Executive Disorder* on the BNW main stage. What a dynamo!

Then there's Reed's riotous BNW colleague, Taj Ruler, featured in two different

performances. Catch Ruler in her element as improvisation master in *Songs of MN Summer* with the Shrieking Harpies. She also collaborates in a feminist re-telling of William Shakespeare's comedy classic, with a slight title addition: *Much Ado About Nothing (as told by Dogberry and Verges)*. She shares, "It's the play written by Shakespeare cut way down told by six women and two puppets. There are some powerhouse actors in it!"

Other works to seek out are *The Zoo Story* by the late great gay playwright, Edward Albee, which still stuns with themes of gay alienation, *First Year Queer*, *His Name Doesn't Matter*, *Code: L-O-V-E*, and *Pope Joan*, who rates among the most controversial figures in the history of Roman Catholicism. ■

MINNESOTA FRINGE FESTIVAL

Through Aug. 13
Various Minneapolis Venues
www.fringefestival.org



En Passant. Photo by Christian Unser



Seattle skyline. Photo courtesy of Hey Engel/Bigstock.com

Sleepless in Seattle

Now I know why folks are sleepless in Seattle. It's the coffee. Starbucks was launched here and boasts shops on nearly every corner. Folks line up at the original location at Pike Place Market as if visiting the shrine at Lourdes. I grab a go-cup at my hotel, because another reason for no snoozing is that the city boasts a grande-size list of what to see and do. And eat.

Start out in Southside at Highline Botanical Garden near the airport, which, in fact, was once an airport runway. That beloved cottage garden now blooms with beds of roses, iris, lilies, and a whole lot more to calm pre- or post-flight visitors (free admission).

Speaking of aviation, the Museum of Flight is another people-magnet, with five buildings spanning ten acres showcasing over 160 historic aircraft, from the first fighter plane of 1916 to the majestic 747 Concorde. Climb into Air Force One to spy LBJ's hat rack and JFK's own rack of pipes, then into a space-mission training module.

Speaking of blast-off, the museum just acquired Apollo artifacts commemorating the 50th anniversary of the U.S. versus U.S.S.R. space race. Amazon's Jeff Bezos launched the project to reclaim the Apollo 12 and 15 rocket launch engines, lost beneath the ocean for 43 years. The exhibit also displays moon rocks, a moon buggy, and astronauts' space suits.

From space suits to Space Needle, the city's icon, erected for the 1962 World's Fair, anchors Seattle Center—a theme park for the culturally curious, ranging from performance halls for theater, ballet, and opera to multiple amazing museums. First, join the line to ascend the needle for a 360-degree view of Emerald City, named not only for its innovative mindset but for its pine-clad parks. Check out the hard-working harbor on Puget Sound, then scan snow-crowned Mt. Rainier.

At its base stands Chihuly Garden and Glass. Enter an Oz-like world of blown glass landscapes by home bro Dale Chihuly, including a 15-foot Sealife Tower: blue glass "waves" populated by glassy critters. The adjoining garden blooms with brilliant glass stems, stalks, bubbles, and baubles.

Just as otherworldly is the neighboring Museum of Popular Culture (MoPop). It's got it all—fantasy, horror, sci-fi, *Star Trek* (create your own episode)—with artifacts ranging from Leonard Nimoy's *Star Wars* tunic to Dorothy's blue dress and the "skin" of the Cowardly Lion. There's a guitar gallery and another dedicated to indie games (Super Mario, anyone?).

Head downtown for masterpieces of another sort at Seattle Art Museum (you'll spot it by Jonathan Borofsky's "Hammering Man" on the sidewalk). Within, it hosts a who's who of contemporary art, including

a cheeky Picasso take-off called "Desmoiselles of Alabama." I especially treasured the collection of Northwest Native art and another dedicated to Modern African Renaissance. Super gift shop, too.

Feast your eyes on the natural and man-made art of Seattle's cityscape via Argosy Cruise's hour-long voyage along the hilly coastline departing at Pier 55. Then discover another art form at the famous Pike Place Market, launched in 1907 and today home to 200 stalls of arts and crafts and eats on a nine-acre site that spans 12 buildings. Feast on French baked goods, Bavarian meats, Ukrainian pierogies, and local seafood while exploring its back alleys lush with sips and bites. Among the newest: Radiator Whiskey and upscale Storyhill Coffee.

A block away at Pike Brewing Company, wander through its beer museum, then summon a flight of craft beers. If wine's your thing, hike down to Pioneer Square's Estates Wine Room, a former art gallery now proffering the art of the vine BTG or in curated flights. Mine highlighted Double Canyon's Syrah and Cab plus Archery Summit's Pinot Noir—all supple and elegant.

Head to SoDo to explore the neighborhood's dozen wineries and tasting rooms. At Charles Smith, the 2014 Sixto Chardonnay proves he's on his way to his goal "to produce the best Chard in the state of Washington." Yet the state's star is Syrah, as in Powerhorse's estate vintage and B. Leighton's big, dark, fruity version.

Next, Kerloo Cellars, where winemaker Ryan Crane ("kerloo" is a crane's call), formerly from Uptown, greeted me wearing a Twins cap, then introduced his Chardonnay—"a lighter, prettier wine, not a punch in the face." Next, his peachy, Provence-style rosé, and an elegant syrah, which are all foot-stomped, he swears (volunteers accepted).

Brian Grasso, of Structure, aims for "soft, approachable, food-friendly" wines, such as his fruit-forward Bauhaus Syrah. Next, Structure's Malbec ("Washington does so well with Rhone varietals") and top-of-the-line Foundation Syrah ("Washington's best varietal"). I took a bottle along to dinner that night at Lark, about which Brian told me, "I ordered the beef tartare. And then for dessert, I ordered another beef tartare."

I can understand that. Some might call Lark the best restaurant in Seattle; others, the best in the neighborhood. Under dangling Edison bulbs fenced by tall windows, I made a meal of small plates: foie gras with pureed rhubarb and duck jus, followed by a ravioli, big as a Frisbee, plump with asparagus and atop melted leeks, nettle butter, pecorino, and a sunny egg;

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finally, mussels in red curry with lime, peanuts, and coconut. Yes!

Revel, a James Beard winner, blends right into its counter-cultural neighborhood with pop art on the walls of a hipsters' canteen. Grab a seat at the counter to watch the cooks' alchemy while slurping short-rib dumplings, pork-belly pancake with kimchi, rice bowls starring tuna or paneer, or my fine choice, seaweed noodles mined with Dungeness crab and red curry. Finish with a trio of tiny donuts built of cardamom with sweet-tart lemon curd, burnt-honey caramel, and candied walnuts.

Pac Rim's also the name of the game at Triple Door, a svelte jazz club with food from its sister, Wild Ginger. Going with small plates again, I bolted down roasted shiitake spring rolls; chicken pot stickers attended by black vinegar; and bao buns lush with star anise-roasted duck. Add an elite cocktail and settle in.

The Chihuly site boasts a café as winning as the art. It's called Collections because that's what its decor celebrates: Chihuly's personal amassment of, say, dozens of accordions that sway from the ceiling; ceramic dogs; bottle openers; pocket knives; inkwells; alarm clocks. Well, you get the idea.

The chef's menu focuses on what he identifies as the trend in Seattle kitchens: "Good, simple food with great ingredients from the farms across the mountains in Eastern Washington. Pike Place Market is a driving force." What's hot? "Korean barbecue. Dim sum. Distilling is huge. Chefs are starting to own farms, too, even growing wine grapes." His menu reflects Chihuly's taste for the classics: Dungeness crab cakes with apple-watermelon radish slaw, house-made buratta cheese, and (Dale's favorite) a Northwest-style Louie salad starring more crab and shrimp.

Heading to Southside and the fare of its Asian residents, we lunched at Bai Tong, a classy Thai restaurant whose red curry—rich with coconut milk and sparked by chili paste—took me back to Bangkok. Din Tai Fung, which

just opened next to Nordstrom (another Seattle-born operation) in South-center Mall, is the latest outpost of a family operation that harks back to Taiwan, says Manager Misun Jung, who leads me through an orgy of dim sum, starting with a bowl of rich chicken broth and tender meat, then bamboo baskets holding tiny dumplings, from pork xiao long bao to shrimp-topped shao mai, abetted by a mountain of garlicky green beans. Surrounded by Asian families who definitely know what they're doing, I'm in heaven.

That evening, I dine at 13 Coins, a supper club frozen in time since 1972. It's a must for everything—and I do mean everything—from oatmeal to Reubens, burly steaks to mounds of pasta, best-known for prime rib and piccatas (choose veal or, here, salmon). Everything comes with spaghetti laced with garlic butter and a side of lip from the cooks behind the counter. That's prime seating for repartee that starts off with "Order of asparagus PLEASE SIR" screamed down the line by stand-up comics that masquerade as cooks.

Best for last: I'm staying at Cedarbrook Lodge, just minutes from the airport and the light rail station to the center city, surrounded by a forest of pines and birch. Its kitchen is headed by an alum of the French Laundry who plucks from gardens right outside my room to create standout fare like my starter, asparagus married with new potatoes and black truffle in pickled ramp vinaigrette. Next up, local foie gras with—what?—cocoa nib marshmallow, peanuts, Bourbon caramel, and banana bread. Never mind: it works. On to chili-glazed pork with fried green tomatoes, collard greens, and mascarpone polenta. Good? No. Outstanding.

On the way to the airport, pull over at Seattle Chocolates for a tour and tasting of elite flavors such as best-selling black fig pistachio or Arabica cherry espresso to dull the pain of leaving. For info, visit www.seattlesouthside.com and www.seattlegayscene.com. ■

OUR LAVENDER

LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES



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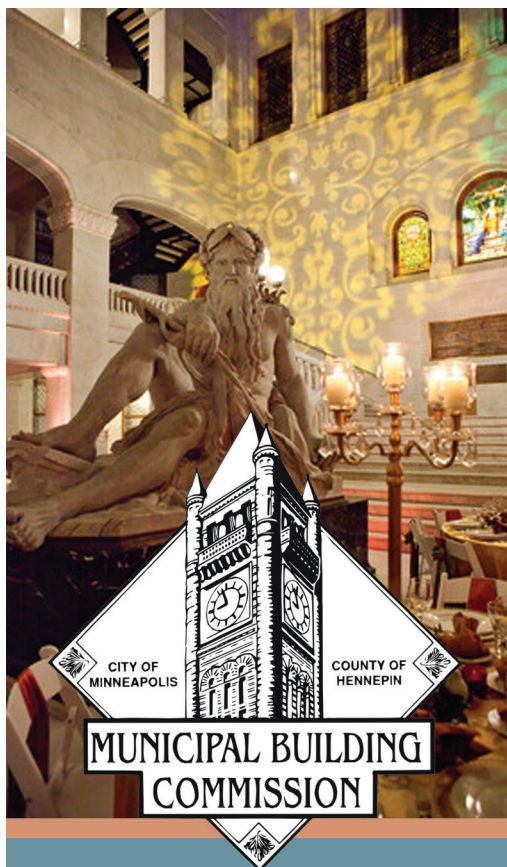
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• WEDDING STYLE •

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If I had to label anything the “dumbest invention ever” it would be the label “one size fits all.” How is the same article of clothing going to fit two different people, two different body types, two different kinds of beautiful in the same way? That’s right, it’s not. Nothing truly is “one size fits all” because nothing fits everyone—nothing feels right for everyone.

Which is why it is so crucial that wedding wear not only be available in a variety of sizes and styles but also be offered in abundance to everyone regardless of physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or anything else that makes him or her uniquely beautiful. Bespoke wedding wear is made to fit each individual, not a mass of various sizes of people. Bespoke wedding wear is designed around the wearer with their size, body type, and personal preferences in mind. Including dresses and suits, bespoke wedding wear is available for any man, woman, transgender, or nonbinary individual. For same-sex couples, bespoke wedding wear is ordered and made to fit the wearer in either a dress or suit regardless of that individual’s gender identity. Made-to-measure suits are offered, which are cut from fabric and made based on the individual’s measurements. Although custom-made wedding wear allows for a uniquely crafted piece created for each individual wearer, it is unlike couture clothing and therefore far less expensive. Couture cloth-

ing means that each piece is one-of-a-kind and there is no other like it in any other size. Custom-made items can be offered to multiple people but in their own individual sizes. Bespoke wedding wear can be especially helpful to people with smaller frames who wear suits and people with larger builds who wear dresses because each article will be created to flatter your own body type. By wearing a dress or suit that was specifically built to fit you, your wedding day will be that much more personal.

Here’s a list of some of the local companies that offer bespoke wedding wear to any and all future brides and grooms.

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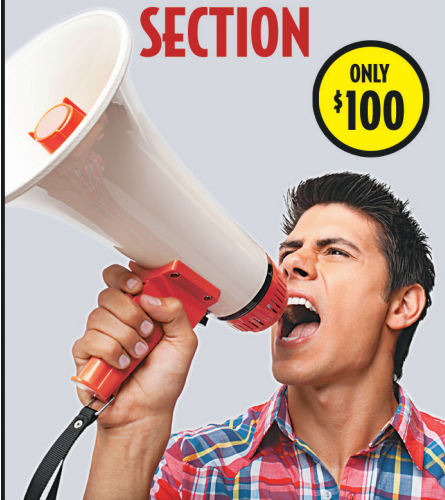
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www.modehausbridal.com

Modehaus Bridal offers custom-made bridal gowns that are first sketched according to the vision of the wearer, then measured and sewn to fit the wearer’s body, and finally constructed to bring the original sketch to life. To schedule an appointment or learn more, you can fill out a contact form on their website.

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KMK DESIGNS**2500 University Ave. W, Ste D1, St. Paul****www.kmkdesigns.org**

If anyone understands custom-made, it's KMK Designs. A mother-daughter operated company, KMK Designs offers custom-made dresses ranging from cosplay-inspired to replicas from movies, TV shows, or plays. However, they encourage designs as unique and different as the people wearing them, so they do not recreate other designers' work but are willing to take inspiration from other dresses to suit each client's needs.

BEAUTY BY DESIGN**2400 N Second St., Ste 206, Minneapolis****www.beautybydesignmn.com**

Not only does Beauty by Design offer gowns that are made to fit each individual customer, but they also offer repurposing services. If you have another dress or article of clothing that has sentimental value, you can repurpose it into a wedding gown with the help of Beauty by Design. They'll help every step of the way from measurements to construction to alterations and final touches.

JOYNOELLE BOUTIQUE**312 W 42nd St., Minneapolis****www.joynoele.com**

Starting with a consultation, Joynoele takes the wedding gown design process very seriously. After discussing how the wearer envisions the dress, designers will begin the sizing process by draping fabric over the customer to gather measurements and further discuss how the final product will look. Not only does the customer get to perfectly pinpoint the look they are trying to create, but they also have a warehouse of fabric to choose from so he or she feels as great as he or she looks.

STUDIO 749**www.marjoriemagidowschalles.com/welcome-to-studio-749/1**

Designer Marjorie Magidow Schalles knows art. From painting to garden art to sewing, Schalles does it all. She offers custom sewing and pattern-making to create glamorous gowns for daytime and evening wear. With over 30 years of experience, Schalles knows how to perfectly blend her own creativity with your comfort in mind. Contact studio749design@gmail.com for more information.

Suits:**MARTIN PATRICK 3****212 Third Ave. N, Ste 106, Minneapolis****www.martinpatrick3.com**

Martin Patrick 3 is a gem of the Twin Cities for its abundance of apparel, accessories, home goods, and more. But it's also beloved for its made-to-measure suits. Martin Patrick 3 offers suit-fitting services that involve measuring the customer and constructing the suit based on those measurements.

MILBERN**1685 University Ave. W, St. Paul****www.milbern.com**

Milbern can help create the suit of your dreams with their fusion of technology and fabric. First, they'll help you build a virtual suit so you can pick out the style, pattern, fabric, etc. that you'd like. This also helps choose accessories that will suit the suit. Once you've done this, they'll measure you and begin constructing the suit with the fabric you chose based on the design you created. This way, you get to be your own designer.

HUBERT WHITE**747 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis****www.hubertwhite.com**

Hubert White creates made-to-measure suits, jackets, and shirts of various brands and prices. Also, pieces can be individualized by mak-

ing them single-breasted, double-breasted, center-vented or with side vents. Different lapels, pockets, and construction can be used to ensure that your dream suit doesn't have to just be a dream any longer.

J. HILBURN**4214 Garfield Ave., Minneapolis****www.jhilburn.com**

J. Hilburn offers made-to-measure suits that blend Italian fabrics and European tailoring to create the perfect piece for you. Not only is there a variety of fits to choose from, but there are also different monogramming, lining, lapel, button, venting, and pleating options, so it is very unlikely that they won't offer exactly what you're looking for.

HEIMIE'S HABERDASHERY**400 St. Peter St., St. Paul****www.heimies.com**

Get your suit made by a family that has tailoring in its blood dating back to 200 years ago. At Heimie's, you can get a custom-made suit tailored by Anthony Andler who understands the need for your suit to be as unique as you are. Also, complimentary alterations are offered on regular priced items.

TOP SHELF**3040 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis****www.topshelfinc.com**

At Top Shelf, you can get a custom suit, custom shirts and high quality accessories. Top Shelf has seen many people request alterations on store-bought suits throughout the past, so they understand the importance of custom-made suits. By ordering a suit through Top Shelf, all alterations will be made during the construction process, so there won't be any need to get additional alterations once the suit has been crafted.

TOM JAMES**2523 S Wayzata Blvd, #100, Minneapolis****www.tomjames.com**

Tom James started as a company that makes made-to-measure suits for men and women in the workforce. However, after popular demand, they have expanded into made-to-measure suits for weddings. They will measure the wearer and create a suit that not only fits the customer's style but also flatters his or her individual body type.

KING BROTHERS CLOTHIERS**1330 Quincy St. NE, Studio 301B, Minneapolis****www.kingbrosclothiers.com**

At King Brothers Clothiers, bespoke is the only language they speak. Both custom-made suits and shirts can be purchased. Suits start at \$995, and shirts are around \$160. Fittings can be scheduled online, and once a fitting is done, the process of constructing your perfect suit is underway.

MARTY MATHIS CLOTHIERS**608 Second Ave. S, Ste 275, Minneapolis****www.martymathisclothiers.com**

Marty Mathis lives by the philosophy that looking sophisticated without too much effort is important. With his help, you can look any way you want without so much as lifting a finger. Marty Mathis Clothiers will measure, construct, and fit your suit to make sure that you leave feeling satisfied with your purchase.

TWILL**3295 Galleria, Edina****www.twillmn.com**

From suits, sports coats, trousers, and outerwear, Twill offers everything you'll need to look and feel great on your wedding day. Additionally, Twill offers a comprehensive custom shirt collection, which takes away the struggle of finding one on-the-rack. With Twill's help, you can find a suit that will make you look as amazing as you feel. ■

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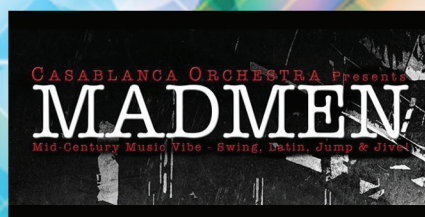
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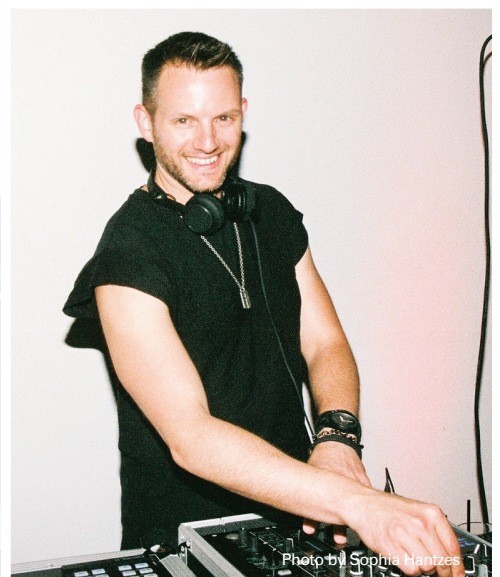
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• WEDDING STYLE •

By Cassidy Tarala • Photos by Lucas Botz



CHOW DOWN WITH CHOWGIRLS

The location, the apparel, the venue, the guest list, the first dance, the music: what's not to worry about in the midst of the chaos of planning a wedding? With so many things to think about and so many decisions to be made, it can get a little overwhelming. Thankfully, with the help of Chowgirls Killer Catering, it just got a lot easier to make the most important decision of all: food.

Chowgirls Killer Catering is a certified 100 percent female-owned, award-winning catering company based in Minneapolis. Using seasonal ingredients, Chowgirls helps newlyweds-to-be create sustainable fare that is savory, sociable, and accompanied by handcrafted cocktails. Chowgirls

recently opened a new location on Hoover Street in Minneapolis which has already become adored for its “mid-century pole barn” vibe. “We’ve made it modern-glamorous by opening up the ceilings and removing a lot of the ’60s-style wood paneling. We’ve popped in a lot of windows to bring light to the offices and styled it in a cheerful palette. The kitchen is in the heart of the building and is more than three times the size of our previous location,” say co-founders Heidi Andermack and Amy Lynn Brown.

Andermack and Brown keep seasonal trends and styles in mind when helping plan wedding menus. Chowgirls food is very sustainable and frequently sourced locally, and they have seen the same all-natural, sim-

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Photo by Laurie Falk McVean, Lauren B Photography

plistic style reflected in modern weddings. “We’re seeing more monochromatic color schemes for everything from clothing to table decor and cork and agate on table settings—more natural elements and greenery than glitz and flowers,” they say. Also, a lot of Chowgirls’ clients are incorporating more interactive elements in their dinners. This includes family-style dinner, wine and beer pairings, and even food trucks.

Something to keep in mind when serving guests is to always ensure that everyone has enough to eat. Food selections should reflect the tastes of the couple while still taking into account the tastes of the majority of the guests. “As the couple, it is your day, and you should serve food that you love. But you want your guests to feel satisfied and remember your wedding meal as a delicious part of the evening. Don’t compromise on taste, and think of your guests when you choose the menu,” Andermack and Brown say.

Of course, it wouldn’t be dinner without a sweet, rich dessert to top it all off. Chowgirls recently purchased a cotton candy machine and are excitedly creating new flavors like mango and coconut. Clients enjoy this dessert component because it adds a fun interactive element that is appreciated by kids and adults alike.

Keeping in mind the season in which your wedding takes place can also play a major role in creating the menu. According to Chowgirls, winter is the best time to book a wedding if you’re working on a smaller budget. “Many vendors offer discounts for services, food, and rentals during this ‘slow’ season,” explain Andermack and Brown. Likewise, it’s easier to book weddings during spring months, especially in Minnesota, due to the unpredictable climate. However, outdoor weddings aren’t typically recommended until June when the weather is more likely to cooperate. Summer is hands-down the busiest wedding season, and it also happens to be a favorite at Chowgirls. “We love catering beautiful outdoor weddings, and because we’re a seasonal caterer, the bounty of

produce available makes our menus most plentiful,” they say. Another popular wedding season is fall, especially with all of the natural beauty that Minnesota has to offer. “The fall colors make for some great photo ops, and potential guests are less likely to be vacationing than in the summer months, so guest turnouts tend to be higher,” they say.

Regardless of the season, Andermack and Brown advise that keeping in mind the size of your wedding is key. “When planning a large wedding, be prepared with a larger budget, and be sure to hire vendors who can take the details off your hands. A wedding planner can help you wrangle the needs of a large wedding and help you manage that increased budget,” they say. Chowgirls caters year-round for any sized wedding, and they can help make even the largest wedding seem like an intimate setting perfectly tailored to the couple. “When planning a smaller wedding by design, you have the opportunity to create more intimacy for your guests. Whether this is your venue selection, style of reception, or decor, you have more freedom to create the spaces and experiences you want for your guests—and to enjoy these details more intimately with your guests,” they say.

Although wedding planning is accompanied by the stress of picking the right location, clothing, venue, decor, guest list, and so on, picking the right food will be a lot simpler with the help of Chowgirls. Appointments can be made by calling Chowgirls at 612-203-0786 or stopping by their new location at 336 Hoover St. NE, Minneapolis. For additional information, visit their website at www.chowgirls.net.

Whether you’re planning on tying the knot on a sunny summer day or an icy Minnesota winter afternoon, the ladies at Chowgirls can help you create a menu that is both personal to you as a couple and tasty to each and every one of your guests. From interactive desserts to locally grown fare, Chowgirls Killer Catering will leave your guests talking about your one-of-a-kind cuisine for years to come. ■

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A DAY in the Life

BY ANDY LIEN
PHOTO BY HUBERT BONNET

DREW ATKIN

Age:
57

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Princeton, NJ. (The “preppiest” town in America.)

Where do you live?

I live in Minneapolis’s North Loop Neighborhood. I love the energy of this part of town. Unique bars and restaurants give me plenty of ideas for new cocktail recipes.

Who do you live with?

I live with my husband James, and my dog, Wrigley. We just got married this past Valentine’s Day in Las Vegas.

What is your occupation?

After a successful career as an entrepreneur I retired and started Bartending By Drew. BBD is a private bartending service. We specialize in corporate events, social events, and weddings for the LGBTQ community. Many of our staff come from the best restaurants and bars in town. I also bartend at the Bank Restaurant in the Westin, Minneapolis. We have a great happy hour. Come visit.

When did you come out?

2014—I was a late bloomer. It’s great to live in a city that is so supportive of our community.

How’d that go?

Of course, like many, I thought it was going to be a disaster. It turned out to be exactly the

opposite! My entire family and close network of friends have been so supportive.

When do you wake up?

I’m usually bartending until after midnight so I’m not usually up before 10:00 a.m., unless Wrigley needs an early walk.

Phone alarm or old school alarm?

No alarm. I love having the kind of occupation that let’s me sleep in.

What’s the first thing you do in the morning?

Take the pooch for a walk and stop at Spyhouse for coffee and the best almond croissant in the Twin Cities.

Breakfast?

It’s my favorite meal of the day. Love the French toast at Egg and I and the blueberry pancakes at Keys and the Lowry.

Coffee?

Absolutely. I love strong French brews. My friends say my coffee tastes like tar so they don’t let me make it often.

Cream or no?

Half and half with Splenda (I know...it’s not good for me).

How do you spend your commute:

Walking. I work right in the neighborhood. Absolutely the BEST way to commute.

If your job were like a yearbook, what would you be voted?

Most likely to make sure everyone has a good time. That’s a bartender’s primary job. Anyone can mix drinks.

What inspires you?

Successful entrepreneurs. I was fortunate to be an entrepreneur before I retired. The energy and innovation that a small passionate group can create is incredible. I’ve tried to bring this perspective to Bartending By Drew.

Do you eat your lunch while working or take a break?

Not a huge lunch person. When I’m working I eat whenever I can. Bartenders rarely get a chance to have a sit down meal. We are always moving.

Is your work space tidy or a hot mess?

It’s a hot mess. Thankfully, James is the organized one in this relationship.

What’s been your favorite job?

I love bartending. You meet great people and usually have the chance to take someone’s bad day and make it better. While a cocktail helps, it’s really about listening and being a shoulder to cry on. I also loved founding my first company, ClickIQ.

Who are your heroes?

I think hero is a very overused term. My heroes are those who have the courage to be comfortable in their own skin. I have a lot of respect for innovators who redefine an industry by thinking creatively and acting swiftly.

Favorite weeknight meal: Go out, take out, or cook in?

I like to cook but I’m rarely around, so take out. Schezuan Spice or Black Sheep are my go-tos.

Most embarrassing moment:

Very early in my career I was in a big client meeting and wanted to prove myself. As we were talking about price I chirped in, “We always want to maximize expenses for our clients.” Everyone just stopped and looked at me. I had meant to say minimize expenses. We still got the client but it was a great, if painful, learning experience.

On a usual weeknight, you are doing what?

I have the opposite schedule of most people. I am either doing an event or working the 2-12 shift at the Westin. My social life begins after midnight. As a 57-year-old, this has taken me a long time to get used to.

Favorite weekend activity:

We love movies, new restaurants, and breweries. If I’m not working we are usually doing something like that. I’m also a big Twins fan and we can walk to the stadium from our apartment! On TV, I am a huge *Law & Order* and *Million Dollar Listing* fan.

Words of wisdom to share:

“Never, ever, ever, ever give up.”
— Winston Churchill
“Life is short. Stake awake for it.”
— Caribou Coffee napkin

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• WEDDING STYLE •

By Frank Bohlander



Photo courtesy of Friday/Bigstock

FLORALS AND STYLES THROUGH THE YEARS

Flowers are almost as important a part of the wedding as the couple exchanging vows. Fresh flowers will always mark an occasion as a celebration worthy of extravagance.

Same-sex wedding ceremonies are as varied as our community. We at Best Wishes Floral have delivered to parks, restaurants, bars, churches, and backyards. The most striking similarity between these locations is that couples tend to select a setting that is personal as opposed to traditional. Flower arrangements are just as personal.

Early on after same-sex marriage became legal, we saw couples completing the legal aspects of their relationships—often on an anniversary of a commitment ceremony (one couple married on their 36th anniversary!)—with minimal fanfare. Today, couples are taking more time to plan, formalizing newer commitments. We see the flowers becoming more important and elaborate.

With the rise in importance comes the question of style. What's in style? What's trendy? Our weddings are our own inventions! Your flowers should be, too. Wedding parties are a mixture of witnesses, attendants, family, friends and can involve various types of floral arrange-

ments, small and large, simple and elaborate.

Simple boutonnieres can be worn by both men and women, or hand-tied bouquets and corsages can be mixed and matched to fit your wedding party. For a more formal look choose a traditional approach, with boutonnieres and bouquets. Colors and styles should reflect your personalities and vision for the day: sophisticated in shades of white or casual mixed colors. A professional florist can offer suggestions and guidance as you plan.

An archway created from twigs and garlands can frame you as you exchange vows. Centerpieces on reception tables will add to the celebration. Simple jars filled with wildflowers or elaborate arrangements on risers will create a festive atmosphere to match the day. Have fun, be creative, and above all, celebrate well! ■

Frank Bohlander can be found at Best Wishes Floral, in downtown Golden Valley. Best Wishes is a full-service floral and gift shop offering a little different take on the traditional floral shop! For more information, visit bwfloral.com, also on Facebook as Best Wishes Floral.



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Chuck Renslow, 1929–2017

Leather- and GLBT-Community Pioneer and Leader

Chuck Renslow, a pioneering gay leatherman, photographer, publisher, business owner, and community activist who became a legend in the Chicago area and around the world, passed away at the age of 87 on June 29, 2017, in Chicago.

Renslow made many significant contributions to the development of the culture and community that came to be known as “leather,” a shorthand for the leather/BDSM/fetish community. Today Renslow is perhaps best known as the founder and executive producer of the International Mr. Leather contest. Readers also may know him as one of the co-founders of the Leather Archives & Museum. But these are only two of Renslow’s many notable accomplishments during his long and active life.

Charles George Renslow was born on August 26, 1929, in Chicago to George Elroy Renslow and Charlotte Ross. However, his mother later discovered his father was a bigamist, so after the age of three Renslow was raised by his mother and maternal grandmother.

While still in high school Renslow discovered he was attracted sexually to men. Subsequently, and unusual for the era, he was able to live his life as a gay man without guilt, shame, or remorse. In 1953 Renslow met and fell in love with Dom Orejudos, an artist, dancer, and choreographer. Renslow and Orejudos became the nucleus of the Renslow Family, a family of choice exploring alternative relationship styles (what today is described on Facebook as “It’s complicated”). Over the years the family included both their mothers and Orejudos’ brother as well as other friends, lovers, and partners. Sadly, Orejudos died in 1991 and many other family members died young due to AIDS, accidents, and other causes.

After being a member of his high school’s camera club, Renslow later pursued further photographic education and eventually opened a photo studio to supplement the earnings from his full-time job at a drug store. The photo studio evolved into Kris Studio and published catalogs and “physique” magazines featuring Orejudos’ art (under the pseudonyms “Etienne” and “Stephen”) and Renslow’s beefcake photography. In 1958 Renslow and Orejudos became owners of the Triumph Gym. The gym provided Renslow with a continuing supply of muscular models for his photography and also led to his running sev-

eral bodybuilding title contests.

Also in 1958 Kris Studio was raided and Renslow was charged with sending obscene materials through the mails (because his photos contained “excessive genital delineation” through the posing straps on his models). Renslow, unlike some other physique photographers, fought the charges and eventually was exonerated. In 1966 he was arrested again on obscenity charges; the case later was dismissed.

After discovering that sadomasochism (“S&M”) and what then was called “rough sex” was a turn-on for him, Renslow became part of the era’s underground S&M network and leather/BDSM themes started appearing in the magazines published by Kris Studio. In 1960 Renslow was instrumental in opening Chicago’s first leather bar, the Gold Coast, as a gathering place for the emerging leather culture. The Gold Coast went through several iterations at different addresses before finally closing in 1988.

Over the years Renslow also was involved with many other businesses (including bars, restaurants, and bath houses) catering to the gay and leather communities in Chicago. Man’s Country, a gay bath house, opened in 1973 and is still in operation. (Many of these businesses suffered occasional police raids into the 1980s.)



Chuck Renslow addressing the audience at the International Mr. Leather contest on May 29, 2016—the last time he was able to do so.

From 1981 to 1986 Renslow was the publisher of *Gay Life*, a newspaper for Chicago’s gay and lesbian community. He also had business interests at times in Kansas City, Phoenix, and New York City. Renslow and his family also hosted some memorable parties throughout the years including, starting in 1974, the legendary White Parties.

In 1972 the Gold Coast began presenting the annual “Mr. Gold Coast” contest. Over the years the crowd attending the contest grew too large to fit into the bar. In 1979 this led to the Mr. Gold Coast contest being transformed into the International Mr. Leather (IML) contest. A Leather Market was added in 1988 (with five vendors!) and the International Mr. Bootblack contest was added in 1993. For many years Renslow delivered a “State of the Community” address to the IML audience; however, he was unable to be present at the contest in 2017 and instead watched the contest at home via Skype.

In 1992 Renslow and Tony DeBlase, designer of the Leather Pride flag and one of the publishers of *Drummer Magazine*, co-founded the Leather Archives & Museum to preserve and display the history of the leather/BDSM/fetish communities. Many artifacts from Renslow’s various businesses are collected there, along with examples of artwork by Orejudos.

Although Renslow never held public office (he thought it would not be possible because of his leather connections), he was a lifelong Democrat and was for many years involved behind the scenes as a political activist working for the GLBT and leather communities. Renslow also was a lifelong seeker of spiritual enlightenment who appreciated the value of ritual and ceremony. As one expression of this he became a Master Mason.

Renslow received numerous awards and honors over the years including membership in the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, a Lifetime Achievement Award from *The Leather Journal*, a Centurion Award as Leatherman of the Century, and a Leather Leadership Award from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. ■

To find out more about Renslow’s fascinating life and his many contributions to the leather/BDSM/fetish and GLBT communities, read *Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow* by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen, published in 2011 by Prairie Avenue Productions.



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2017 Hyundai Elantra Sport



Have you ever put a Hyundai Elantra on a track? Well...I did.

I'm not saying this because I'm trying to be a "Gold Star Gay" or get one of *Lavender's* Community Awards for 2017. It was part of the job. This feat of tracking an Elantra was achieved at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. It was part of the Midwest Automotive Media Association's annual Spring Rally this past May, which I am a member of.

Road America offers three venues on one property. The primary track is the famed road course that runs over four miles through 14 turns. Inside is a karting course that is much tighter. Usually designed for go-karts, the media association runs some of the cars available to us on this track as their autocross course.

Hyundai lent one of their newest Elantras for us to drive on the autocross course—the 2017 Sport model. I did a few laps in it and eventually had a smile on my face at the end.

A few weeks later, the same exact car arrived at my house. If only there was a track open nearby for me to repeat my autocross performance in this car...

Before we dive into our impressions of the 2017 Hyundai Elantra Sport, we need to make something clear. This is an all-new Elantra. It has been on the market for over a year with a divergent lineup of sedans: the base SE, the fuel-efficient Eco model, the luxurious Limited, and the Sport sedan. Each one of these Elantras have one thing in common: they continue to entice consumers with an advanced design that is also occupant-friendly and pretty efficient. In fact, the sixth generation Elantra became the big success story for Hyundai in this country and the leading seller for the brand.

Obviously this story is not just about the new Elantra, but adding a new dimension for enthusiasts to this popular car. Let me show you both.

One look at the 2017 Elantra tells you that it is an evolutionary design. It is part of the design language called Fluidic Sculpture 2.0, which continues a lot of the themes from previous generation models and refines

them for a larger audience. Not that the previous Elantra was a great design; that car alone sent a lot of manufacturers back to the drawing board. Yet, the new Elantra took the best elements from the last model and gave it some updates that still distinguishes itself from the rest of the pack. The front end now has a pronounced grille with softer lines and a more concentrated headlamp unit. The roofline looks the same, but the glasshouse was tweaked in the rear door with a fixed pane. Same goes with the rear end, which saw larger lighting units and a cleaner trunk lid.

One of the complaints about Fluidic Sculpture 2.0 has been about how "soft" Hyundai's design has gone. Granted, the sharper lines of the previous Elantra made it a stand-out success. The one argument I would make on the new Elantra would be that it would be seen as more modern and quite attractive.

The Sport model adds a few things, but goes on as a subtle machine; a true wolf in sheep's clothing, if you will. The 18-inch alloy wheels bring out a premium sports look to the package, as does the specific grille texture and the "Turbo" badging.

The biggest change from the previous Elantra is in the interior. Based on the current Sonata, gone are the extreme angle shapes seen on the previous Elantra. The entire instrument panel is straightforward with no gimmicks. You can call it conservative, but it actually works better with upgraded switchgear and readouts. That starts with an updated instrument binnacle, with a new TFT screen and a series of new infotainment touch screens, matching the rest of the Hyundai lineup. The steering wheel is smaller, with a thicker rim.

The front seats are a different story. For the Sport, Hyundai went with an aggressive, heavily bolstered front seat with black perforated leather and red stitching. The result is a supportive, firm, but complaint seat for all bodies. Rear seat room has improved with better leg and headroom than the previous generation. The trunk offers 14.4 cubic feet of space, which is expandable by folding down the rear seats for longer items.

Also in the Sport, you do get Apple CarPlay and Android Auto com-

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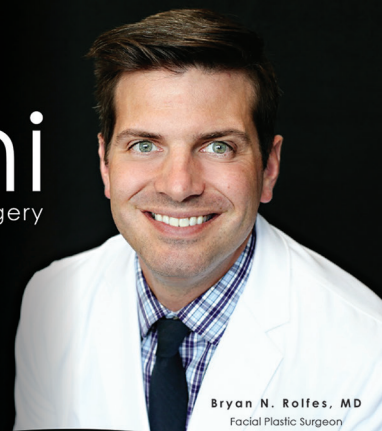


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patibility; the latter works very well with the upgraded 8-inch touch screen infotainment system. There is also Bluetooth connectivity, HD Radio, and SiriusXM onboard. There is a good set of eight Infinity speakers—including a subwoofer—filling the cabin with sound.

If you chose the SE or Limited model, your engine is now upgraded to a naturally aspirated 147-horsepower 2.0-liter four-cylinder unit. The Eco offers a 1.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine with 128 horsepower. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the Sport is powered by a 1.6-liter turbocharged engine with 201 horsepower. If one engine can really make the case for getting an Elantra, it is the latter one.

For enthusiasts wanting this Sport model, they can select a six-speed manual transmission or a 7-speed dual-clutch gearbox. Our tester had the superb dual-clutch gearbox. It eventually sends power down to the front wheels. The performance package alone is superb, with the engine offering a lack of turbo lag with aggressive shifts from the dual-clutch transmission. Sport mode ratchets up the shift points for more revs and transitions. Switch it back to Normal mode, and the engine and transmission feel relaxed, but ready to perform when necessary. Plus, if you have an affection for older small sports cars and roadsters, you will love the exhaust note. It reminds me of an old European car, maybe an Opel Kadett or an MGB. Something nostalgic...nostalgic and delightful.

Though it offers superb performance, there is one surprise we found on the Elantra Sport. Our fuel economy average came to 35.3 MPG. The high average we saw was 40.8 MPG. Process this for a moment: these numbers were achieved in a 201-horsepower, turbocharged sporty compact sedan.

The previous Elantra combined good road manners with its balanced

ride and solid handling. The ride is certainly smooth and absorbent over bad road surfaces. Choosing the Sport offers a tuned suspension that severely limits lean, roll, and dive. It runs flat through the corners.

In normal mode, the steering feel is on the soft side, but not overly loose. Flip it into Sport mode and it firms up to a perfect feel. Turning is quite good and offers the right road feel in either mode. Braking power is good with superb stops in both normal and panic situations. On the Elantra Sport, you do get blind spot monitoring, a rearview camera, and cross-traffic alert as standard.

The 2017 Elantra lineup starts off with a basic SE model. The base price of that sedan is \$17,150 equipped with a manual transmission. Choosing the Sport model will set you back \$21,650. Our tester came with a sticker price of \$26,110.

In total, the 2017 Hyundai Elantra is a fine car. It exhibits a lot of progress from previous versions, while maintaining all of the good things that still attract new buyers year after year. The good news is that there are many choices to make this time around, with more to come for the next model year.

However, what should bring people to Hyundai showrooms is the Sport model. Not because it is the proverbial “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” but one that would challenge other sport compacts. That crowd is an illustrious one, including the Volkswagen Golf GTI, Ford Focus ST, Honda Civic Si, Nissan Sentra SR Turbo and NISMO, and any Mazda3 with the larger 2.5-liter engine. That’s good company to keep.

Which brings us to this question: how did the Elantra Sport do on the autocross track? In short, it was as good there as it was on the road. That should be good enough for you to consider one, don’t you agree? ■

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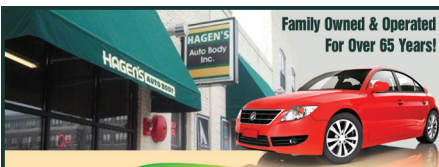
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ADVOCACY

Rainbow Health Initiative

Committed to advancing the health and wellness of LGBTQ communities through research, education and advocacy. 2021 E. Hennepin Ave., Ste. 220 Minneapolis, MN 55413 (612) 206-3180 www.rainbowhealth.org

AIDS/HIV INFO & TREATMENT

Aliveness Project, The

Community Center for Individuals Living with HIV/AIDS – On-site Meals, Food Shelf and Supportive Services. 3808 Nicollet Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55409 (612) 824-LIFE (5433) www.aliveness.org

Minnesota AIDS Project AIDSLINE

Statewide referral service for HIV information & resources including testing, care services, education around PrEP. 2577 Territorial Road St. Paul, MN 55114 Metro: (612) 373-2437 Statewide: (800) 248-2437 mapaidslines@mnaidslinesproject.org www.mnaidslinesproject.org

U of MN HIV Research Studies

Looking for HIV+ and HIV- individuals to participate in research studies. 420 Delaware St. SE Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612) 625-7472 hiv.umn.edu

ANIMAL RESCUE

Second Chance Animal Rescue

Dedicated to rescuing, fostering, caring for, and adopting out dogs and cats into forever homes. P.O. Box 10533 White Bear Lake, MN 55110 (651) 771-5662 www.secondchancerescue.org

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Twin Cities Quorum

Your GLBTQA chamber of commerce working to invigorate, build & partner for a diverse business community. 18 N. 12th St., Ste. 3606 Minneapolis, MN 55403 (612) 460-8153 www.twincitiesquorum.com

EVENT VENUES

Germanic-American Institute

Germanic-American Institute - Old World Charm as the perfect backdrop for your wedding day. 301 Summit Ave. St. Paul, MN 55102 651-222-7027 www.gai-mn.org

Minneapolis City Hall & Court House

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Family Tree Clinic

LGBTQ Health Matters at Family Tree! Offering respectful, affordable sexual health services to meet your needs. 1619 Dayton Ave. St. Paul, MN (651) 645-0478 www.familytreeclinic.org

NAMI Minnesota

(National Alliance on Mental Illness) Providing free classes and peer support groups for people affected by mental illnesses. 800 Transfer Rd. #31 St. Paul, MN 55114 (651) 645-2948 www.namihelps.org

Red Door Clinic

Sexual health care for all people. Confidential tests and treatment in a safe, caring setting. 525 Portland Ave S., 4th Floor Minneapolis, MN 55405 (612) 543-5555 Reddoorclinic.org

LIBRARY

Quatrefoil Library

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Weisman Art Museum

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MUSIC

Radio K - Real College Radio

Radio K (KUOM) is the award-winning student-run radio station of the University of Minnesota. 610 Rarig Center 330 21st Ave S. Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612) 625-3500 www.RadioK.org

PERFORMING ARTS

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Children's Theatre Company creates theatre that educates, challenges and inspires. Values: Imagination, Excellence, Respect, Inclusion. 2400 3rd Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55404 (612) 874-0400 <http://www.childrenstheatre.org>

Hennepin Theatre Trust

Orpheum, State, Pantages and New Century Theatres Twin Cities' best live entertainment: Broadway shows, music concerts, comedy, dance and more! Minneapolis, MN 1-800-982-2787 www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

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Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Hosting, presenting, and creating performing arts and educational programs that enrich diverse audiences. 345 Washington St. St. Paul, MN (651) 224-4222 www.ordway.org

The Minnesota Opera

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Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus

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POLITICS & RIGHTS

OutFront Minnesota

Delivering programs/services in the area of public policy, anti-violence, education, training and law. 310 E. 38th St., Ste. 204 Minneapolis, MN (612) 822-0127 www.outfront.org

PRIDE

Twin Cities Pride

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RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL

Central Lutheran Church

Exploring the promise of God for all. 333 S. 12th St. Minneapolis, MN 55404 (612) 870-4416 www.centralmpls.org

First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

A tradition of forward-thinking humanism at home in the here and now. 900 Mt. Curve Minneapolis, MN 55403 (612) 377-6608 www.firstunitarian.org

First Christian Church

Come explore, be curious, and ask questions... a place where ALL are truly welcome. 610 W. 28th St. Minneapolis, MN 55408 (612) 870-1868 www.fcminneapolis.org

Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

Spiritual, Loving, Relevant, Transforming. Find us on Facebook and Twitter 1900 Nicollet Ave. at Franklin Minneapolis, MN (612) 871-7400 www.plymouth.org

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

inquiring INSPIRING inclusive. Wherever you are on your faith journey, St Mark's welcomes you. 519 Oak Grove St. Minneapolis, MN (612) 870-7800 www.ourcathedral.org

The House of Hope Presbyterian Church

A thoughtful, gracious faith community welcoming all people. Sunday Worship 10am. Child Care, Sunday School. 797 Summit Ave. St. Paul, MN (651) 227-6311 www.hohchurch.org

United Methodist Reconciling Churches

Congregations around Minnesota that intentionally welcome all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. www.mnrcumc.org

TRAVEL

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ZOO

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